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# A car community: An Ames group bonding through motor meetups

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# A CAR COMMUNITY

**AN AMES GROUP  
BONDING THROUGH  
MOTOR MEETUPS**



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To some people, driving is a chore. Cars are used to get from point A to point B, moving you and your friends to your destination in one piece. But to a group in Ames, driving is a lifestyle. Iowa State Stance is a place for the people that keep local car culture alive. Alex Bartholomew, founder of Iowa State Stance, first had the idea for a car club in 2015. He noticed a lot of people enjoyed modifying and tuning their vehicles, but no one was connected. That's when he decided to create the group's Facebook page.

**"I wanted to start a group for car guys around Iowa State to get together and have something to do," Bartholomew says. "This is one big page where everyone can get to know each other and grow car culture in Ames."**

Iowa State Stance is one of the biggest and most active car clubs in Iowa. Their Facebook group has over 500 members, with around 80–100 active members around Ames. About half of those members are ISU students. Meetups are usually informal, consisting of a small group of people that bring their cars, socialize, host grill-outs, and cruise around together. Once a month (usually weather permitting), the group will hold bigger, more organized events that attract drivers from all over the state. Their last big meetup in the fall had over 50 cars show up. "When we do big events we do our best to keep it civil and not piss anyone off," Bartholomew says. Respect is key — no racing, no burnouts.

Bartholomew is the proud owner of a 1999 Nissan 300zx, and he's built it to be uniquely his. It's lowered, painted dark red and sits on gold Infiniterwerks wheels that the company offered him a partial sponsorship to install. "Everyone knows me as the kid with the red 300zx with the gold wheels. It's lowest and slowest, mainly because it's always broken!" he jokes. He does all the work on the car himself and takes such meticulous care of it, it's never even seen snow. (The salt used to melt ice on roads in the Iowa winters has a nasty habit of eating through metal.)

At one meetup, Bartholomew's car and another 300zx broke down within moments of each other. After watching the other car sputter to a stop, Bartholomew began to pull to the side when his car died too. "Nissans are great cars, but damn, are they unreliable," he says.

But that's what makes this group really shine. People are always willing to pull over, wait, and stay behind to help others fix whatever goes wrong with each other's rides. Co-manager Ryan Jenkins says he first became friends with Bartholomew when helping him out after another breakdown.

"People might give you shit for it, but it can be midnight and if you get a flat tire and post in the page, guaranteed, someone will be out there in half an hour helping change it," Bartholomew says. For these drivers, the comradery that comes with meeting up in Walmart parking lots to diagnose problems and hone their mechanical skills is the fun of the club.

"The great thing about this page is that if you don't know how to do something, you can post on the page and ask, 'Does anyone have any knowledge of what needs to be done?' and people will help you out," says Rodney Bartow, another co-manager. "It's a close-knit community."

Blake Edgeton, another co-founder of the club, owns a 2009 Subaru WRX that he likes to call the "Rally Attack". "I bought a WRX because I like quick cars, but also because I want a car that can do almost anything and go anywhere and still be fast, agile and useful," Edgeton says. With help from other members, he changes everything from oil to brake pads to transmissions fluid to his clutch. He says he's probably saved about \$1,500 in maintenance using knowledge he's learned from the club.

Members of the club say one of their favorite things is how inclusive the community is. Iowa State Stance is for enthusiasts of all levels — no matter what you drive, you'll feel the sense that you're welcome. You'll find everything from Hondas, Mazdas, BMWs, Audis, Jeeps and Fords. Even Lamborghinis and Porsches have been known to show up at the meets. Whether you're male or female, prefer imports or American muscle, automatic or manual, it doesn't matter — car culture is judgement free. For Iowa State Stance members, cars become more than just machines — they're vessels into which these drivers can imprint their personalities. 